

I claim:

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1. A method for completing a rental agreement online, said method comprising the steps of:
  1. entering reservation-related information and rental-related information for an item or service, said entering step entering: (a) said rental-related information without employing a master rental agreement, or (b) at least some of said rental-related information from a master rental agreement and allowing modification of said information from the master rental agreement for rental of said item or service without modifying the master rental agreement;
  2. providing a reservation for said item or service based at least in part upon said reservation-related information;
  3. creating and displaying a rental proposal based upon said reservation and said rental-related information;
  4. accepting said rental proposal online; and
  5. displaying a rental agreement based upon said accepted rental proposal.
2. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:
  1. entering said rental-related information without employing a master rental agreement.
3. The method of Claim 2 further comprising:
  1. manually entering said rental-related information online.
4. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:
  1. entering at least some of said rental-related information from a master rental agreement; and
  2. allowing modification of said information from the master rental agreement for rental of said item or service without modifying the master rental agreement.
5. The method of Claim 4 further comprising:
  1. entering at least one of a member identification and a user name to identify said master rental agreement.
6. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:
  1. maintaining a history of rental information for prior rentals by a user;

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entering information from an identification of a user; and  
entering at least some of said rental-related information from the  
history based upon said information from an identification of a user without employing  
a master rental agreement.

7. The method of Claim 6 further comprising:  
employing a driver's license as said identification.
8. The method of Claim 6 further comprising:  
provisionally entering at least some of said rental-related  
information from the history.
9. The method of Claim 8 further comprising:  
modifying at least some of said provisionally entered at least  
some of said rental-related information from the history.
10. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:  
displaying said rental proposal at at least one of a client system  
and a kiosk; and  
accepting said rental proposal at one of said client system and  
said kiosk.
11. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:  
renting a vehicle under said rental agreement.
12. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:  
providing time and location information regarding a vehicle rental  
in said reservation-related information.
13. The method of Claim 12 further comprising:  
employing at least some of pick-up location, pick-up date, pick-  
up time, drop-off location, drop-off date, and drop-off time as said time and location  
information.
14. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:  
providing arrival information in said rental-related information.
15. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:  
providing rental rate requests in said reservation-related  
information.
16. The method of Claim 15 further comprising:

selecting a vehicle for reservation in said reservation-related information.

17. The method of Claim 16 further comprising:  
selecting a capacity of said vehicle in said reservation-related information.
18. The method of Claim 17 further comprising:  
employing at least one of luggage capacity and passenger capacity as said capacity of said vehicle.
19. The method of Claim 18 further comprising:  
displaying at least one of an image of said vehicle, a class of said vehicle, and a rental price for said vehicle prior to said step of selecting a capacity of said vehicle.
20. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:  
providing information regarding a user in said rental-related information.
21. The method of Claim 20 further comprising:  
employing at least one of e-mail address, telephone number, residence, driver's license information, travel contact information, and frequent flyer information in said information regarding a user.
22. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:  
displaying instructions for a user at a rental facility in said rental agreement.
23. The method of Claim 22 further comprising:  
employing a plurality of different rental facilities;  
selecting one of said rental facilities; and  
dynamically providing said instructions based upon the selected one of said rental facilities.
24. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:  
displaying a rental confirmation in said rental agreement.
25. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:  
employing optional information in said rental-related information.
26. The method of Claim 25 further comprising:

selecting at least one of a plurality of rental options in said optional information; and  
updating rental cost information based upon said selected rental options.

27. The method of Claim 26 further comprising:  
recalculating said rental cost information and sending a corresponding transaction to a mainframe computer.
28. The method of Claim 25 further comprising:  
employing at least one of insurance coverage and prepaid fuel in said optional information.
29. The method of Claim 28 further comprising:  
employing at least one of collision damage waiver and extended insurance in said insurance coverage.
30. The method of Claim 25 further comprising:  
employing at least one of an additional driver, an underage driver, collision damage insurance protection, extended insurance protection, prepaid fuel, a child safety seat, and a stroller in said optional information.
31. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:  
displaying rental pricing information in said rental proposal.
32. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:  
displaying rental terms and conditions in said rental proposal.
33. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:  
sending an e-mail message to confirm said reservation after entering said reservation-related information and providing said reservation.
34. The method of Claim 33 further comprising:  
entering said rental-related information after receiving said e-mail message.
35. The method of Claim 34 further comprising:  
linking from said e-mail message to a web page to complete said rental agreement.
36. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:  
modifying said rental agreement.
37. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:

modifying said reservation.

38. A method for completing a rental agreement between a client system and a server system, said method comprising the steps of:

under control of the client system,

entering first information pertaining to a reservation of an item or service, and second information pertaining to a rental of said item or service, said entering step entering: (a) said second information without employing a master rental agreement, or (b) at least some of said second information from a master rental agreement and allowing modification of said second information from the master rental agreement for rental of said item or service without modifying the master rental agreement,

sending said first information and said second information to the server system,

receiving from said server system a rental proposal based upon said first information and said second information,

displaying said rental proposal, and

accepting said rental proposal online; and

under control of the server system,

receiving said first information and said second information from said client system,

providing a reservation based at least in part upon said first information,

generating the rental proposal based upon said reservation and said second information, and

sending the rental proposal to the client system.

39. The method of Claim 38 further comprising:

including terms and conditions in the rental proposal;

displaying an object;

selecting said displayed object to accept said terms and conditions; and

including said terms and conditions in the rental agreement.

40. The method of Claim 38 further comprising:

generating the rental agreement at the server system based upon said accepted rental proposal.

41. The method of Claim 40 further comprising:  
sending the rental agreement from the server system to the client system; and

displaying the rental agreement at the client system.

42. The method of Claim 38 further comprising:  
renting a vehicle under the rental agreement.

43. A client system for completing a rental agreement with a server system, said client system comprising:

an entry component entering first information pertaining to a reservation of an item or service, and entering second information pertaining to a rental of said item or service, said entering step entering: (a) said second information without employing a master rental agreement, or (b) at least some of said second information from a master rental agreement and allowing modification of said second information from the master rental agreement for rental of said item or service without modifying the master rental agreement;

a processor component cooperating with said entry component;  
a communication component, responsive to said processor component, sending said first and second information to the server system, and receiving from said server system a rental proposal responsive to said sent first and second information; and

a display component displaying said rental proposal,  
said entry component and said processor component cooperating to initiate acceptance of said rental proposal, and

said communication component, responsive to said acceptance, sending said acceptance to the server system, in order to complete the rental agreement online.

44. The client system of Claim 43 wherein the display component is a browser, which displays said rental proposal.

45. The client system of Claim 44 wherein said communication component receives an HTML document provided by the server system; and wherein

said processor component processes said HTML document for display by said display component.

46. The client system of Claim 43 wherein said item or service includes a vehicle rental.

47. The client system of Claim 43 wherein said item is a vehicle.

48. The client system of Claim 43 wherein said rental proposal is sent as an HTML document as provided by the server system; and wherein said processor component processes said HTML document for display by said display component.

49. A server system for completing a rental agreement with a client system, said server system comprising:

a data storage component storing information for a plurality of items or services;

a communication and processing component receiving first information pertaining to a reservation of an item or service from the client system, and receiving second information pertaining to a rental of said item or service from the client system;

a reservation component retrieving stored information from said data storage component for said items or services, and providing a reservation based at least in part upon said first information and the retrieved stored information; and

a rental component generating a rental proposal based upon said reservation and said received second information, sending the rental proposal to the client system, and receiving an acceptance of the rental proposal from the client system, in order to complete the rental agreement online, said rental component receiving: (a) said second information without employing a master rental agreement, or (b) at least some of said second information from a master rental agreement and allowing modification of said second information from the master rental agreement for rental of said item or service without modifying the master rental agreement.

50. The server system of Claim 49 wherein the rental is for a vehicle.

51. The server system of Claim 50 wherein the vehicle is a land-based vehicle.

52. The server system of Claim 51 wherein the land-based vehicle is a car.

53. A method for completing a rental agreement with a server system using a client system, said method comprising the steps of:

entering first information pertaining to a reservation of an item or service, and second information pertaining to a rental of said item or service, said entering step entering: (a) said second information without employing a master rental agreement, or (b) at least some of said second information from a master rental agreement and allowing modification of said second information from the master rental agreement for rental of said item or service without modifying the master rental agreement;

sending said first and second information to the server system; receiving from said server system a rental proposal responsive to said sent first and second information;

displaying said rental proposal;

accepting said rental proposal; and

sending said acceptance to the server system, in order to complete the rental agreement online.

54. A method for completing a rental agreement with a client system using a server system, said method comprising the steps of:

storing information for a plurality of items or services; receiving from the client system first information pertaining to a reservation of an item or service, and second information pertaining to a rental of said item or service;

retrieving the stored information for said items or services;

providing a reservation based at least in part upon said first information and the retrieved stored information;

generating a rental proposal based upon said reservation and said received second information, said generating step generating said rental proposal: (a) without employing a master rental agreement, or (b) employing at least some of said second information from a master rental agreement and allowing modification of said second information from the master rental agreement for rental of said item or service without modifying the master rental agreement;

sending the rental proposal to the client system; and

receiving an acceptance of the rental proposal from the client system, in order to complete the rental agreement online.

55. A system for completing a rental agreement, said system comprising:

a client sub-system comprising:

an entry component entering first information pertaining to a reservation of an item or service, and entering second information pertaining to a rental of said item or service, said entry component entering: (a) said second information without employing a master rental agreement, or (b) at least some of said second information from a master rental agreement and allowing modification of said second information from the master rental agreement for rental of said item or service without modifying the master rental agreement,

a processor component cooperating with said entry component,

a communication component, responsive to said processor component, sending said first and second information to a server sub-system, and receiving from said server sub-system a rental proposal responsive to said sent first and second information, and

a display component displaying said rental proposal, said entry component and said processor component cooperating to initiate acceptance of said rental proposal, and

said communication component, responsive to said acceptance, sending said acceptance to the server sub-system;

said server sub-system comprising:

a data storage component storing information for a plurality of items or services,

a communication component receiving said first and second information from the client sub-system,

a reservation component retrieving stored information from said data storage component for said items or services, and providing a reservation based at least in part upon said first information and the retrieved stored information,

a rental component generating a rental proposal based upon said reservation and said received second information, and

a processor component cooperating with said communication component, said reservation component and said rental component to provide the reservation, to send the rental proposal to the client sub-system and to receive an acceptance of the rental proposal from the client sub-system, in order to complete the rental agreement online; and

a communication sub-system communicating between the communication component of said client sub-system and the communication component of said server sub-system.

56. The system of Claim 55 wherein said communication sub-system is a global communication network.

57. The system of Claim 56 wherein the global communication network is the Internet.

58. The system of Claim 57 wherein said display component employs a web page for displaying said rental proposal.

59. The system of Claim 55 wherein said items are vehicles; and wherein said display component employs a web page for selecting one of said vehicles.

60. The system of Claim 55 wherein said communication sub-system includes a global communication network employing an ATM protocol.

61. The system of Claim 60 wherein said communication sub-system employs a frame relay protocol; and wherein said server sub-system includes a kiosk communicating with said frame relay protocol, said kiosk having at least one of a printer and a display for displaying the rental agreement.

62. The system of Claim 55 wherein said processor component is a web server; and wherein said data storage component is a database server.

63. The system of Claim 55 wherein said reservation component is a reservation system running on a mainframe and said rental component is a rental system running on said mainframe.

64. The system of Claim 55 wherein said server sub-system includes a web server for a web site; wherein said display component includes a browser for displaying portions of said web site; and wherein said entry component, said processor component and said communication component of said client sub-system cooperate to send said first information as reservation-related information to said web site, to send said second information as rental-related information to said web site, and to receive

said rental proposal from said web site; and wherein said display component displays said received rental proposal.

65. The system of Claim 55 wherein said communication sub-system employs an ATM protocol; wherein said processor component of said server sub-system is a web server; wherein the communication component of said server sub-system includes an ATM switch and a firewall; and wherein said client sub-system communicates with said web server with said ATM protocol through said ATM switch and said firewall.

66. A method for completing a rental agreement online and obtaining an item or service for rental, said method comprising the steps of:

entering reservation-related information and rental-related information for said item or service, said entering step entering: (a) said rental-related information without employing a master rental agreement, or (b) at least some of said rental-related information from a master rental agreement and allowing modification of said information from the master rental agreement for rental of said item or service without modifying the master rental agreement;

providing a reservation for said item or service based at least in part upon said reservation-related information;

creating and displaying a rental proposal based upon said reservation and said rental-related information;

accepting said rental proposal online;

displaying the rental agreement based upon said accepted rental proposal; and

going to a rental counter before obtaining said item or service for rental.

67. The method of Claim 66 further comprising:

displaying said rental proposal at a client system; and  
accepting said rental proposal at said client system.

68. The method of Claim 66 further comprising:

renting a vehicle as said item or service.

69. The method of Claim 68 further comprising:

going to the rental counter to obtain an optional item before obtaining said vehicle for rental.

70. The method of Claim 69 further comprising:  
obtaining a stroller at the rental counter as said optional item.
71. The method of Claim 66 further comprising:  
providing expedited service at the rental counter based upon said  
rental agreement; and  
allocating said vehicle at the rental counter.
72. The method of Claim 66 further comprising:  
displaying the rental agreement at the rental counter.
73. The method of Claim 66 further comprising:  
entering said reservation-related information and said rental-  
related information by employing at least one of a telephone, a global communication  
network, and electronic mail.

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